

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 01754 01 OF 02 271850Z
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
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AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL TRIESTE POUCH
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 1754

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

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TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: BERLINGUER'S SPEECH TO PCI CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION

REF: ROME 1630 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY. THE TONE OF ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) SECRETARY
GENERAL ENRICO BERLINGUER'S SPEECH TO A CENTRAL COMMITTEE
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PAGE 02 ROME 01754 01 OF 02 271850Z

SESSION WHICH GOT UNDERWAY IN ROME JANUARY 26 SUGGESTS THAT
THE MARGINS FOR MANEUVERING TO RESOLVE ITALY'S CURRENT
POLITICAL CRISIS HAVE BEEN REDUCED. CONCERNING THE POLITICAL
SITUATION, THE BERLINGUER SPEECH FOCUSED ON FOUR MAJOR
POINTS: (A) IT REPEATED THE CALL FOR A GOVERNMENT OF
NATIONAL EMERGENCY AS THE PARTY'S PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE;
(B) IT INDIRECTLY SUGGESTED THAT THE PCI MIGHT BE WILLING TO

ACCEPT ENTRY INTO A QUOTE CONTRACTED, RECOGNIZED, EXPLICIT MAJORITY END QUOTE; (C) IT STRESSED THAT THE PCI DESIRES TO AVOID EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME LAYING THE GROUNDWORK TO BLAME THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS SHOULD A RECOURSE TO EARLY ELECTIONS BECOME NECESSARY; (D) IT FLOATED THE QUOTE HYPOTHESIS END QUOTE OF THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) BASED ON A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD IN WHICH THE DC WOULD PARTICIPATE. THE CC IS EXPECTED TO CONCLUDE ITS WORK JANUARY 28 FOLLOWING A DISCUSSION OF THE BERLINGUER SPEECH AND A FINAL SUMMARY OF THE PROCEEDINGS BY BERLINGUER. END SUMMARY.

1. THE TONE OF ENRICO BERLINGUER'S SPEECH TO THE PCI'S CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION WHICH GOT UNDERWAY IN ROME ON JANUARY 26 WAS ESSENTIALLY TOUGH, SUGGESTING THAT THE MARGINS FOR MANEUVERING IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS HAVE BEEN FURTHER LIMITED. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION IS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE FACT THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT BERLINGUER HIMSELF HAS PRESENTED THE INTRODUCTORY REMARKS TO A CC SESSION IN AT LEAST 18 MONTHS AND BY BERLINGUER'S STATEMENT THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1970 THAT THE CC HAS BEEN CALLED INTO SESSION FOLLOWING THE OPENING OF A POLITICAL CRISIS.

2. ON THE POLITICAL FRONT BERLINGUER'S SPEECH HAD FOUR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ROME 01754 01 OF 02 271850Z

MAJOR ASPECTS. FIRST, IT REITERATED ONCE AGAIN THE PCI'S CALL FOR A GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL EMERGENCY, PLACING THIS SQUARELY AS THE PARTY'S PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE. SECOND, IT INDIRECTLY SUGGESTED THAT THE PCI MIGHT BE WILLING TO ACCEPT, AS THE VERY MINIMUM, ENTRY INTO A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY WHICH WOULD BE QUOTE CONTRACTED, RECOGNIZED, AND EXPLICIT END QUOTE. (BERLINGUER HINTED AT THIS BY NOTING THAT THE DC IS ONLY PREPARED TO AGREE TO AN UPDATING OF LAST SUMMER'S PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD, LEAVING UNCHANGED THE NATION'S POLITICAL FRAMEWORK WHICH EXCLUDES THE COMMUNISTS QUOTE NOT ONLY FROM PARTICIPATION IN A GOVERNMENT BUT ALSO FROM A CONTRACTED, RECOGNIZED, EXPLICIT MAJORITY END QUOTE.) THIRD, WHILE SETTING FORTH CATEGORICALLY THAT THE PCI OPPOSES EARLY NATIONAL ELECTIONS, THE SPEECH, NEVERTHELESS, LAYS THE GROUNDWORK FOR AN EVENTUAL ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN AND SETS THE STAGE FOR PLACING FULL BLAME FOR THE ELECTIONS ON THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS. FINALLY, THE SPEECH FLOATS QUOTE THE HYPOTHESIS END QUOTE OF THE FORMATION OF A GOVERNMENT WITHOUT THE DC COMPOSED OF THE PARTIES WHICH HAVE BEEN DEMANDING A CHANGE IN THE NATION'S POLITICAL FRAMEWORK. THIS GOVERNMENT WOULD BE BASED UPON A PROGRAMMATIC ACCORD MADE WITH THE DC (THUS IT WOULD NOT BE IN

THE OPPOSITION) AND WOULD BE SUBJECT TO A MEASURE OF CONTROL BEYOND THAT NORMALLY EXERCISED BY THE PARLIAMENT.

3. BERLINGUER'S SPEECH CONTAINED A LENGTHY ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FACTORS AT PLAY SINCE THE WAR WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO CREATING THE SITUATION IN ITALY TODAY. AT THE SAME TIME, HE PROVIDED A FULL EXPLANATION OF WHY THE PCI DECIDED THAT THE ANDREOTTI GOVERNMENT WAS NO LONGER SUFFICIENT TO CONFRONT THE PROBLEMS FACING THE NATION TODAY. WHILE CRITICIZING THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE QUOTE NON-SFIDUCIA END QUOTE GOVERNING FORMULA, BERLINGUER DID NOT DIRECTLY CRITICIZE ANDREOTTI, THUS AVOIDING A MOVE WHICH WOULD HAVE MADE ANDREOTTI'S CURRENT MANDATE TO FORM A NEW GOVERNMENT ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE TO CARRY OUT.
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PAGE 04 ROME 01754 01 OF 02 271850Z

4. ADDRESSING THE QUESTION OF THE FIVE REFERENDA WHICH ARE SCHEDULED FOR THIS SPRING, BERLINGUER ADVANCED THE NEED FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION WHICH WOULD MAKE AT LEAST SOME OF THEM UNNECESSARY. ON THE QUESTION OF ABORTION, BERLINGUER INDICATED A PCI WILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE, A GESTURE TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. HE NOTED THAT THE PCI BELIEVES THAT ABORTIONS SHOULD BE USED ONLY IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES, ALTHOUGH HE ARGUED THAT THE EXISTENCE OF CLANDESTINE ABORTIONS MAKES IT NECESSARY FOR THE STATE TO MOVE IN AND TO MAKE PROVISIONS WHEN THE NEED FOR ABORTION EXISTS.

5. BERLINGUER REITERATED THE PCI'S POSITION ON THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY AND POINTED TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FOREIGN POLICY DOCUMENTS APPROVED IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES AND THE SENATE LAST FALL, WITH THE AFFIRMATIVE VOTES OF THE COMMUNISTS. IN THE FOREIGN POLICY SECTION OF THE SPEECH, HE CALLED ATTENTION TO THE "INADMISSIBLE INTERFERENCE" OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IN ITALIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. RETURNING TO THIS POINT LATER

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PAGE 01 ROME 01754 02 OF 02 271852Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 1754

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IN HIS SPEECH, HE NOTED THAT THERE ARE OBVIOUSLY THOSE, SUCH AS MR. KISSINGER, AMBASSADOR GARDNER, SENATOR BROOKE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND PRECISELY WHAT THE PCI REPRESENTS AND WHAT IT IS SEEKING TO ACHIEVE. HE SUGGESTS THAT, IN AN ATTEMPT TO EDUCATE THEMSELVES, THESE PARTIES LOOK AT THE ITALIAN ELECTORAL RESULTS FOR THE LAST 30 YEARS WHICH HAVE SEEN THE PCI SHARE OF THE VOTE GO FROM 19 PERCENT TO 34.5 PERCENT.

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PAGE 02 ROME 01754 02 OF 02 271852Z

6. BERLINGUER STERILIZED SO-CALLED EUROCOMMUNISM OF ANY ANTI-SOVIET CONNOTATION BY NOTING THAT THERE IS NO INTENTION TO SET UP A NEW INTERNATIONAL GROUPING OF COMMUNIST PARTIES. HE DID NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT THERE ARE EMERGING SOME ELEMENTS COMMON TO CERTAIN WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES AND IT IS THIS PROCESS TO WHICH SO-CALLED EUROCOMMUNISM REFERS. BERLINGUER HAD THE STANDARD PRAISE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION WHICH SET THE STAGE FOR THE CREATION OF A NEW SOCIETY BASED ON SOCIALIST PRINCIPLES. EARLIER IN HIS SPEECH, BERLINGUER HAD ALSO REFERRED TO QUOTE THE ERRORS AND THE HORRORS END QUOTE OF CERTAIN PARTS OF THE STALIN ERA.

7. LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE, BERLINGUER TALKED OF THE GOAL OF WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNISTS TO ADVANCE TOWARD SOCIALISM. THIS NEW SOCIALIST SOCIETY, HE SAID, WOULD BE BUILT IN AN ORIGINAL AND DEMOCRATIC WAY DIVERSE FROM THE PATH FOLLOWED IN RUSSIA AND IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

8. THE FINAL PORTION OF BERLINGUER'S SPEECH CENTERED ON SHORTCOMINGS IN THE PARTY'S PERFORMANCE AND DIFFICULTIES WITHIN ITS RANKS. HE SPOKE OF EPISODES OF SECTARIANISM WHICH HAVE OCCURRED AND CONCESSIONS TO RADICAL-EXTREME FORMULATIONS WHICH AVE PERMITTED THE PENETRATION INTO THE PARTY LINE OF ERRONEOUS POLIECAL VISIONS AND DEFORMATIONS. BERLINGUER ALSO COMPLAINED OF THE INSUFFICIENT PCI EFFORT IN THE RECENT SCHOOL ELECTIONS WHICH DEMONSTRATED THAT THERE IS NOW UNDERWAY AN OFFENSIVE BY CERTAIN SECTORS OF THE CATHOLIC WORLD. FINALLY, BERLINGUER, IN A MOMENT OF SELF-CRITICISM, NOTED THE ERROR OF THE LEADERSHIP IN NOT PUSHING, AFTER THE DECEMBER 7 DIRECTORATE MEETING, AN ADEQUATE CAMPAIGN OF DISCUSSION

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PAGE 03 ROME 01754 02 OF 02 271852Z

WITHIN THE PARTY AND OF ORIENTATION AND MOBILIZATION AMONG THE MASSES.

8. COMMENT. THE TOUGH AND RELATIVELY UNCOMPROMISING TONE OF THE BERLINGUER SPEECH SUGGESTS THAT IT IS NOW BECOMING EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE THE CURRENT POLITICAL IMPASSE. WITH EH CONCLUSION OF THE CC, THE BUCK WILL PASS BACK TO THE DC WHICH IS FACED WITH A MINIMUM DEMAND--AN EXPLICIT PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY--WHICH IS BEYOND WHAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS HAVE INDICATED THEY ARE PREPARED TO CONCEDE. WHILE BERLINGUER INSISTS THAT THE PCI DESIRES TO AVOID EARLY ELECTIONS, HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES MUST HAVE BEEN AWARE THAT THE TONE OF HIS SPEECH WOULD INCREASE THE POSSIBILITY THAT EARLY ELECTIONS MIGHT OCCUR. INDEED, ONE CAN ALSO POINT TO THE SPEECH AS SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT WITH THE COMMUNIST BASE IN THE EVENT THAT ELECTIONS SHOULD MATERIALIZE.

9. THERE HAS BEEN SOME SPECULATION HERE THAT THE PCI HAS FOLLOWED THE LEAD OF ITS FRENCH COUSINS IN CHANGING STRATEGY. WE WOULD SUGGEST THAT IT IS STILL TOO EARLY TO DRAW THIS CONCLUSION. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS CLEAR FROM THE SPEECH THAT THE PCI DOES NOT NOW INTEND TO RETURN TO THE OPPOSITION. GARDNER

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